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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0054
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 2377
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 2391
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0332
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0719
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KUALA LUMPUR 001484

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [UNSC](#) [BM](#) [MY](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: MALAYSIA WAITING ON GAMBARI, NOT FOCUSED ON
SANCTIONS

REF: A. STATE 137644 - KEEPING PRESSURE ON THE REGIME
[1](#)B. KUALA LUMPUR 1476 - UMNO YOUTH PROTEST
[1](#)C. KUALA LUMPUR 1470 - CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT FAILED
[1](#)D. KUALA LUMPUR 1386 - NOT ENTHUSIASTIC ON UNSC ROLE
[1](#)E. KUALA LUMPUR 1375 - AMB'S FAREWELL CALL ON FM

Classified By: Ambassador James R. Keith for reasons 1.4 (b and d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The Malaysian government is awaiting the outcome of Gambari's mission and the return of PM Abdullah before considering next steps on Burma, according to MFA Secretary General Rastam, who predictably gave no hint of

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support for sanctions in response to our demarche. A well-connected think tank director told us today that he thought it was possible that ASEAN would exclude the Burmese leadership from the ASEAN Summit. Some 2,000 Burmese and Malaysian protestors again targeted the Burmese, Chinese and Russian embassies on October 2. Malaysia's mainstream media continued its attention on Burma and broke its relative silence on local protests by reporting the October 1 rally that involved the Prime Minister's son-in-law. The Malaysian Bar Council issued a statement in support of Burma's expulsion from ASEAN. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (C) DCM delivered ref A demarche on keeping pressure on the Burmese regime to Malaysian Foreign Ministry Secretary General Rastam Mohd Isa on October 2. DCM emphasized in particular the need for ASEAN members to take effective action following their strong September 27 statement, and highlighted the strengthened U.S. sanctions against regime leaders, including the assets freeze. Rastam replied that Malaysia would await the completion of UNSYG Special Advisor Gambari's current mission to Burma and Prime Minister Abdullah's return to Malaysia (October 6) before considering next steps. He noted that Malaysia also looked forward to Gambari's report to the UN Security Council. Rastam gave no hint of consideration of sanctions. Instead, he said encouraging dialogue would be important to ending the violence in Burma. Countries should pursue such an objective in a realistic manner. He added that the international community may need to offer some positive incentives to encourage and ensure reconciliation within Burma.

[1](#)3. (C) Polchief also delivered the demarche to the Foreign Ministry's Southeast Asia and Pacific Division (II). Principal Assistant Secretary Ismail Haji Salam responded that the Ministry would not engage in serious discussions on next steps on Burma until the results of Gambari's mission were known and Foreign Minister Syed Hamid had returned to Kuala Lumpur (late on October 4).

¶4. (C) For what it's worth, the well-informed Asia Strategy and Leadership Institute Director Dato Michael Yeoh told the Ambassador today that he thought it possible that ASEAN would exclude Burmese leaders from the November ASEAN Summit as a way of following up on the organization's recent UNGA statement. He noted that ASEAN Foreign Ministers had excluded their Burmese counterpart from their New York meeting but added that ASEAN as an institution has no mechanism for implementing measures such as sanctions. In response to the Ambassador's query, Yeoh speculated that ASEAN might arrive at a more indirect approach in which the ASEANs would signal sufficient difficulty for the Burmese that Rangoon might decide itself to either stay away or send low level representation.

¶5. (U) The Burmese, Chinese and Russian embassies in Kuala Lumpur were again the target of pro-democracy protests actions on October 2. Some 2,000 Burmese nationals and Malaysian activists took part in the peaceful rally, according to a press account.

¶6. (U) Malaysia's mainstream media continued its focus on Burma October 2. The New Straits Times, a daily closely linked to the leading UMNO party, carried a front page photograph of a murdered Buddhist monk under the headline, "Myanmar Silenced -- Massacre of the Holy Men." The mainstream media also broke its relative silence on local protest actions by reporting on the October 1 demonstration at the Burmese embassy involving PM Abdullah Badawi's son-in-law and UMNO youth deputy chief Khairy Jamaluddin (ref B).

¶7. (U) Malaysia's official news agency Bernama carried the Malaysian Bar Council's October 2 statement condemning the

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violent suppression of protests in Burma. The Bar Council urged the Malaysian government to support the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus' call to expel Burma from ASEAN.
KEITH